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Munroe Bush
Iowa State University

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The Forester

by Munroe Bush

A forester stands at a gate between two worlds. Pass through this gate in one direction and you come into the intricate world of human technology; pass through the opposite way and you enter the perfection of God's natural world.

The forester is the gatekeeper. More than any other man he determines the effect of one world upon the other. Whether the hunger of technology for raw materials will exhaust the earth, or the earth provide a sustained flow of resources for the well-being of mankind, is to a great extent the responsibility of the forester.

Trees and their forest communities are a fulcrum upon which the entire natural world of renewable resources is balanced. He who manages the forest manages the key to an undiminished yield of the earth's living abundance. The harvest of timber must be adequate for every industrial need, yet this harvest must not jeopardize a maximum forest growth. Neither must the harvest depreciate the role of the forests in building and maintaining a fertile soil, in the management of rainfall, or in providing an essential habitat for wildlife and a no less essential sanctuary for men. Thus to obtain the wood resources which are demanded by the present and, at the same time, assure an adequate future supply of not only wood, but those other resources which our timberlands sustain, is the forester's challenge.

To succeed, he must bring to his critical challenge not only complex technical skills and a vast knowledge of his profession but those human qualities of vision, diplomacy and broad judgment without which no man can accomplish an important work.

How well he mediates, then, between these two worlds of technology and forestry, to what degree he can correlate industrial appetite with sound woodland management will determine the health of the living earth for not only this generation, but for as far as the mind's eye can see. And by this means, ultimately, the forester will determine in large measure the welfare of our civilization.